

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2010***

Present: Selectmen Rosanne Gilbert, Michael Woodworth, and Wes Moore. Others present included Jed Rumford, Ray Konisky, Chief Reed, Lt. Gould, Kim Crisp, Larry Shaw, Ann Elliott, Sue McKinnon, Brian Knipstein, Don Doane, Jeff Buxton, Tom Conner, and Allen Taylor.

Call to order: 5:32pm by Chairman Gilbert.

The following items were signed: checks, Cartographics contract, 2010 Electronic Tax Rate Authorization, New Hampshire Retirement System letter, Newfields School Board letter, and the MS-1.

The following items were discussed: town roads, the sewer line at the Town Hall, use of the marquee, and correspondence from Attorney Fran Lane.

Rosanne advised that she spoke with the Newmarket Town Administrator about mosquito control. At this time Newmarket is larvaciding extensively. They only spray when there is a positive test for EEE or WNV.

Wes made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2010 meeting as amended. Michael seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

Wes spoke about the last meeting of the Police Department Facilities Expansion Project Committee.

Wes informed the Board that he spoke with Kim Crisp, Library Trustee, and gave her approval to replace the oil storage tank and lines at the Library.

The "handicap" parking spot at Main Street Art was discussed and the Town will accept it.

The meeting moved to the Town Hall for a discussion with the department heads and the Budget Advisory Committee about the expectations for the 2011 budget.

The Selectmen are looking for another resident to volunteer to serve on the Budget Advisory Committee. Please contact Nancy at the Town Office if you are interested.

We are looking for estimates to repair the two chimneys, sand and re-paint the flagpole, and replace the sewer lines at the Town Hall. Bids should be given to Nancy at the Town Office.

The Selectmen thanked the Department Heads for keeping their budgets in line this year. They asked them to keep their budgets the same or lower next year. The Department Heads were urged to attend the Town Deliberative Session as well as the School Deliberative Session. Seventy-five percent of Newfields taxes are for the schools.

Wes read the following statement: As we all know, we are faced with an unusual global and local economic environment that has us all fatigued. Unemployment continues to be a problem that plagues our community. Those that are working are experiencing cuts in many areas including the number of hours worked, as well as wages and benefits. Since we met last year, requests for welfare in our small community have skyrocketed. People we all know and care about are hurting and are living on the edge.

Our governments in Washington and in Concord have serious budget issues. In fact, they are broke – more than broke. Their solution, in part, is to down shift their costs to us. This makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for this Board to maintain or reduce the tax rate. Yet, if there was ever a time to maintain or reduce the tax rate, it's now. However small the amount, the citizens of Newfields – those who pay the light bill, deserve a break. They deserve the most efficiently operating government we can provide. And, although everyone in this room has worked hard over the last several years to deliver and manage an efficient budget, I believe there is more we can do. Much more.

In fact, I am calling on this Board and all gathered here tonight to decrease our operating budget by 5% for the next fiscal year beginning January 1, 2011. That represents a decrease of \$76,000.

Yes, it is true, the Town does not offer to its residents much in the way of services. But I believe we can find a way to reach that number with minimal impact on current services. While I have many ideas on how to accomplish this goal, it is best to discuss them, along with the thoughts of my colleagues on this Board, with each department head and the budget committee over the next few weeks.

I will however, offer one suggestion for reducing the budget. I would recommend the Board of Selectmen become a true volunteer board and give up their \$2000 annual salary. That's \$6,000 towards the goal leaving a balance of \$70,000. That's a good start.

Let's be clear on one thing: Reducing the budget will be painful and it will not be easy. If we attempt to do this – and we'll need a majority of the Selectmen to do it – we need to focus on the needs of the community, both in services and the need to keep their tax obligation to a minimum. Further, reducing the budget does not mean the tax rate goes down. As our revenues from other areas continues to fall, from the state and from current use and from building permits and other fees, reducing the budget at the level I suggest may not be enough to keep the tax rate down. And let's not forget the school budgets. We all know the Schools represent the majority of tax dollars spent. Outside of their deliberative sessions, there is little we can do. However, the collective power of every person here tonight can send a statement to the school boards and the surrounding communities that in this extremely difficult economic climate, it is not enough to stop the growth of government spending. Instead, spending must be reduced. It's the only chance we've got if we're to survive.

Wes Moore

September 7, 2010

The Selectmen will meet with each department to review their budget. The department heads will then meet with the Budget Advisory Committee. Everyone was reminded that the budgets could be changed by the townspeople at the Deliberative Session

The meeting resumed in the Selectmen's Office and went into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II. The meeting re-opened to the public at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer
Administrative Assistant